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ABSTRACT

An action research project describes a cross-age tutoring program to help increase the reading achievement of targeted second graders. The targeted population consisted of second and fifth graders in a middle class suburban community west of a large midwestern city. The problems of poor word attack skills and reading comprehension were documented by poor reading test scores and teachers' surveys. Probable causes as indicated by teachers' surveys include concerns related to large class size, which limits the attention teachers can give to oral reading and verbal rephrasing. Based on a review of solution strategies by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the formation of a cross-age tutoring program that focused on one-to-one tutoring. Using the program, the targeted group received more individual attention in the areas of phonics, read alouds, and verbal interaction. The intervention of one-to-one cross-age tutoring using the strategies of promoting, predicting, repeated readings, and verbalizing was successful as evidenced by assessments, surveys, and teacher observations. (Contains 43 references and 5 tables of data; appendixes contain survey instruments, letters to parents, and lesson plans.) (Author/RS)

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ED 409 526

IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION AND WORD ATTACK SKILLS THROUGH CROSS-AGE TUTORING

by

*Susan M. Carli

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master's of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

Saint Xavier University & IRI/Skylight

Field-Based Master's Program

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Dedication

To my husband, Edward, for his

unending encouragement and support

Acknowledgements

The success of "Reading Buddies" would not have been possible if it were not for the cooperation of several people. My first acknowledgement is extended to the four second grade teachers whose cooperation showed throughout the intervention.

To the students of my fifth grade class who maintained their enthusiasm and gave freely of their time to become great tutors.

To the second grade tutees who shared their smiles of success.

To the parents of both the fifth grade tutors and the second grade tutees for granting permission for their child to participate and for all their positive comments.

To all mentioned - a sincere Thank You.

Abstract

Author: Susan M. Carli Site: Geneva

Date: July 14, 1995

Title: Improving Reading Comprehension and Word Attack Skills Through Cross-Age Tutoring

This program describes a cross-age tutoring program to help increase the reading achievement of targeted second graders. The targeted population consists of second and fifth graders in a middle class suburban community west of a large Midwestern city. The problems of poor word attack skills and reading comprehension are documented by poor reading test scores and teachers' surveys.

Probable causes as indicated by teachers' surveys include concerns related to large class size, which limits the attention teachers can give to oral reading and verbal rephrasing.

Based on a review of solution strategies by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, has resulted in the formation of a cross-age tutoring program that will focus on one-to-one tutoring. Using this program, the targeted group will receive more individual attention in the areas of phonics, read alouds, and verbal interaction.

The intervention of one-to-one cross-age tutoring using the strategies of prompting, predicting, repeated readings, and verbalizing was successful as evidenced by assessments, surveys, and teacher observations.

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Chapter 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of Problem

The second graders of the targeted group have poor word attack skills that interfere with reading achievement. Evidence for the existence of the problem includes MacMillan/McGraw-Hill's end-of-year reading test (1993) that indicates student academic performance and also evidenced by a teacher survey (Appendix A).

Immediate Problem Context

The school has an enrollment of approximately 675 students across grades of preschoolers attending special education early childhood classes to standard education fifth grade. The enrollment has remained the same for the past two years, but has increased by approximately 50 students from several years ago as evidenced by the 1994 School Report Card. The school has a varied student population reflecting the ethnic, cultural, and economic diversity found in the large metropolitan area. The student population is multiculturally diversified with White, 59.0 percent; Black, 30.9 percent; Hispanic, 4.0

percent; and Asian/Pacific Islanders, 6.1 percent. This multicultural make-up reflects lower percentages of White and Hispanic students compared to the district and state. However, it represents higher percentages of Black and Asian/Pacific Islanders than at the district and state levels (School Report Card, 1994).

The local school community is large enough to require transportation of students. It contains a few single-family homes in the $80,000 range to many middle income homes at $140,000 to some upper income homes of $250,000. It also contains a large apartment complex and two areas of townhomes and attached housing (Re/Max Realty, 1995).

Economically, the school reflects a low-income population of 15.7 percent which is slightly lower than the district and significantly lower than the state. School attendance historically has been relatively high at the school with a rate of 95.6 percent last school year. This is slightly better than the district and approximately 2.5 percent better that the state. The student mobility rate is at 18.0 percent which is the same as the district and 0.8 percent lower that the state. (School Report Card, 1994).

Administration at the school consists of a principal and associate principal both with master's degrees. The faculty and staff total 57 employees. Of the teaching and professional related services personnel 30 of the 37

employees or 81 percent have their master's degree with many having additional semester hours beyond the master's degree. This is approximately six percent higher than the district and 35 percent higher than the state. The school also employs three secretaries, one building maintenance repairperson, four food service department personnel, and seven lunchroom/playground aides (M.P. Sorrick, personal communication, August 28, 1995).

The school is one of eight elementary schools in a large unit school district southwest of a large mid-midwestern city. This unit school district also houses four middle schools and two high schools. The total district population is approximately 11,650 students. The district encompasses large portions of two southwest suburban cities.

The school was opened in 1977 and built in the open-concept architectural style. Over the past ten years permanent and temporary walls have been constructed so all classrooms are more self-contained. Each room has been carpeted to absorb sound.

In addition, information regarding district administration should be noted. A seven member Board of Education is the decision making body that governs the school district. Central administration includes a superintendent, three assistant superintendents - business, educational services, and human resources.

The school used a basal reading series for many years until the 1993-1994 school year when an integrated language arts series of MacMillan/McGraw-Hill was implemented at first and second grades. Due to financial constraints the same program was not implemented until 1994-1995 in third through fifth grades. The series offers an integration of the language arts through experiencing the communication skills of reading, English, writing, spelling, speaking, and listening.

This is a total new approach for the entire district. However, it was a series that was selected as one of the final three series to choose from by a district committee of teachers, building administrators, and curriculum office coordinators. Then, it was voted the top choice by a majority of all the elementary school teachers.

District and building inservices were held periodically during the year before implementation and the year of implementation to train teachers and administrators in integrating the language arts. Additionally, teachers from within the district were trained for district teachers to use as a resource person when needed and for inservicing purposes.

The program, in general, seems to have many components that offer teachers options in presenting their lessons. However, after inservicing and two years of using the series, teachers have concerns about the lack of

the phonics component and its impact on comprehension.

Surrounding Community

The community in which the school is located is located is 35 miles southwest of a large midwestern city. It has a population of nearly 44,000 residents with a median age of 28 years old. The average salary is $60,000. The average three bedroom, one and one-half bath home is valued at $128,000 while the average rent is $562 a month for a one bedroom apartment. Last year ',780 new housing permits were issued which is up from six years ago when only 213 were issued. The average price for a three bedroom, two and one-half bath home is $160,000. A four bedroom, two and one-half bath home sells, on the average, for $180,000 (Re/Max real estate broker, personal communication, August 28, 1995).

Regional and National Context of Problem

In the 1950's literacy was defined as the ability to read and write (Cooper, 1993). This level of literacy which was satisfactory in the 1950s (Resnick, & Resnick, 1977), would be marginal as the nation enters the twenty-first century. Concern over reading achievement at the state and national levels was evidenced by the publication of Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985).

According to Adams (1990), skillful reading is a

complex system of knowledge and activities which depends first and foremost on visual letter recognition. These letters later form the printed words, which are useless in and of themselves, and are only valuable when they are guided by the activity of language comprehension.

Chapter 2

PROBLEM EVIDENCE AND PROBABLE CAUSE

Problem Evidence

At the beginning of the 1993-1994 school year, a new reading series was adopted by the school district for kindergarten and another series for first through fifth grade. The kindergarten classes adopted the Scott Foresman series, while the first through fifth grades adopted the MacMillan/McGraw-Hill Reading series. First and second grades implemented it in 1993-1994 and third through fifth waited until the 1994-1995 school year.

In February 1995, after two years of implementation, a survey was designed by the school principal after significant concerns were voiced by the eight first and second grade teachers (Appendix A). In the survey the teachers' major concern was the lack of exercises in phonics that were available in the series. Two of the eight teachers also indicated that 44% of their class exhibited difficulty with phonics as evidenced through publisher's tests and teacher observations. One teacher recorded 40% of her class had problems with phonics. The

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fourth first grade teacher reported that 50% of her class demonstrated difficulty with phonics. The four second grade teachers jointly reported that 20% of their students demonstrated difficulty in the area of phonics.

In addition to the teachers' surveys the end of the year MacMillan/McGraw-Hill test results for first graders indicate that 90% of the students were proficient at 60% or better in reading comprehension subtest. In identifying students for the project, the researcher has selected 10 students that scored below the proficiency level of 60%, and 17 students who scored between 60% and 79%. Table 1 shows a frequency distribution by test scores in increments of ten. The 27 tutees are made up of 11 boys and 16 girls.

Table 1

Reading Comprehension Subtest

Frequency Distribution

Percent Range	No. of Boys	Percent Scored	Cum Score	No. of Girls	Percent Scored	Cum Score
100%	17	30%	30%	10	24%	24%
90	12	21	51	11	26	50
80	16	29	80	5	12	62
70	1	2	82	6	14	76
60	5	9	91	5	12	88
50	3	5	96	4	10	98
40	1	2	98	1	2	100
30	0	0	98	0	0	100
20	0	0	98	0	0	100
10	1	2	100	0	0	100
0	0	0	100	0	0	100

Individual interviews with the first grade teachers indicate that there is little cohesiveness between kindergarten's Scott Foresman Reading series and the MacMillan/McGraw Hill Reading series which the first grade uses. First grade teachers also indicated that the students lack knowledge of individual letter sounds, phonemes, and recognition of sight words.

Also interviewed was the learning disabilities teacher who serviced twenty-five first graders in a group for thirty minutes per week. The teacher indicated that through conversations with the parents of these children many were not read to at home and did not have the time to listen to their children read. She indicated that these children would benefit from a smaller group setting in which they would have the opportunity to practice sight words, repeated readings, and be read to.

Through interviews, the second grade teachers voiced their concerns not only with the lack of phonics in the series but also the lack of time in which to drill students on sight words, individual repeated readings, individual discussions about the stories and the lack of time to practice new skills. They attribute their lack of time to their very large class sizes (average of 34 students per class.)

Another indication of an existing problem in reading was the implementation of a Reading Recovery teacher

during the 1994-1995 school year. The teacher is allowed to service only 4 first grade students in a half-day.

Reading Recovery is an early intervention program to help low achieving six year olds learn to read. The program was originally developed by New Zealand educator and psychologist, Marie Clay (1985).

The Reading Recovery teacher worked one-on-one with a child for thirty minutes daily for a period of up to twenty weeks. The very structured session includes, but is not limited, to reading known stories, reading a story that was read one time the previous day, writing a story, working with a cut-up sentence, and reading a small new book (Lyons, 1991).

The Reading Recovery program has been proven to be successful and to date, it has been implemented in 38 states, the District of Columbia, 4 Canadian provinces, and the countries of Australia, England, and New Zealand (Reading Recovery Directory, 1992-1993).

Probable Cause from Literature

The concern over reading difficulty is not only at the local level but of national concern. In April 1995, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) published the reading scores of students across the country. Students of three grades in 39 states were tested. The results indicated that fewer than one third of the students were proficient in reading, that is,

able to handle texts that were at grade level, and that only two to five percent were reading at advanced levels.

In 1986 Stanovich, one of the world's leading reading researchers and twice the recipient of the International Reading Association's Albert J. Harris Award, has applied the concept of the "Matthew Effect" to describe the dramatically different trajectories followed by those children who get off to a good start in reading and those children who do not.

The "Matthew Effect" derives its title from the Gospel according to Mathew:

> For unto every one that hath shall be given and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. (XXV:29)

Stanovich explains that if a child doesn't get a good start in decoding skills, his/her reading comprehension will be hindered. He/she will not find reading enjoyable, therefore will read less and will find school work frustrating to the point of troublesome emotional side effects (Stanovich, 1986). In comparison, the child who got a good start with alphabetic decoding skills finds reading enjoyable and will be more successful and have a more rewarding experience in school.

At the site of this study there are so many reading skills to be taught at the primary level, that

according to the teacher's survey (Appendix A) they devote up to 75% of the school day to language arts which includes the instruction of reading. With so many new skills to be taught there isn't adequate time given to the practice of the new skills.

Practice of these newly introduced skills are of significant importance. Koskien and Blum (1986) equate learning to read with learning to play a musical instrument or learning to perform a particular sport skill. When learning a new skill, the musician or athlete practices over and over until that skill or piece has been mastered.

In the classroom, when a new story is begun it is read only once or twice. This practice does not provide the students with the opportunity to do repeated readings, which have significant effects on fluency, word recognition, and comprehension (Samuels, 1979; Allington, 1983).

When children read orally it is usually in a format called "round-robin reading." Each student in the reading group takes turns reading several lines or a page of a story. An issue in round-robin reading is equal distribution of turns for reading among the children. When a teacher calls on volunteers, it has been shown that assertive children get more than their share of turns.

This is undesirable because there is evidence that

the child reading aloud and directly receiving instruction from the teacher is getting more from the lesson than the children who are following along (Anderson, Mason, & Shirey, 1984).

Another problem with round-robin reading is that the quality of practice is often poor. The problem is acute in the low ability group where children hear only other poor readers stumbling over words. (Anderson et al., 1984). Allington (1983) also points out that low achieving readers using the round-robin reading format, read fewer words, stories, and books. In 1989 Garcia and Pearson state that round-robin reading also means that low achieving readers are found to be given little encouragement or opportunity to examine the structure of their text, to reflect on aspects of its meaning, or to discuss its message.

Reading researchers have provided evidence that shows that re-reading, significantly increases reading rate (number of words per minute) and accuracy (number of words read correctly) (Carver & Hoffman, 1981; Chomsky, 1976; Dahl, 1974; Dowhower, 1987; Herman, 1985; Samuels, 1979).

Literature suggests that for children to be more successful in reading they need:

1. the opportunity of repeated readings
2. the opportunity to rephrase verbally and in

written form

3. the opportunity to practice newly introduced skills

4. the opportunity to be read to

At the site of this practicum with the average class size of 34, these opportunities are very limited, which suggest probable causes for the low reading achievement of the targeted group.

Chapter 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Review of the Literature

In 1955 Flesch's book, Why Johnny Can't Read, attacked the look-say method of word attack skills and advocated a return to phonics. A decade later in the book, Learning to Read: The Great Debate,it was concluded by Chall that programs that included phonics as one component were superior to those that did not. In the second edition of her book, in 1983, Chall found even stronger evidence for phonics.

In 1990, Adams' research further indicates that the most critical factor beneath fluent word reading is the ability to recognize letters, spelling patterns and whole words, effortlessly, automatically, and visually. Moreover, the goal of all reading instruction, in comprehension, depends critically on this ability. This ability, according to (Fisher et al., 1978) does not develop from instructional time that is often squandered on isolated drill, management, and other activities of questionable instructional effectiveness, but rather from

time spent on real reading. Fisher explains that in real reading, children receive direct reading instruction from the teachers, not by spending time doing workbooks and skill sheets. Fisher adds that in real reading the teacher uses activities that foster fluency or constructive and strategic reading, which help the children draw conclusions or reason on a higher level that neither workbooks nor skill sheets can provide.

Alvermann and Moore (1991) agree with Fisher and emphasize that in real reading, learners should be actively engaged with meaningful language rich tasks. The task must make sense to all involved and is one in which students read and respond, write and share, are active participants, rather than passive receivers of information.

With comprehension being the goal of reading, Fielding and Pearson (1994) list four components for a successful program of comprehension.

1. large amounts of time for actual reading
2. teacher directed instruction in comprehension strategies
3. opportunity for peer and collaborative learning
4. occasions for students to talk to a teacher and one another about their response to reading

One reading program that has been successful in meeting these four components is the Reading Recovery

Program (RRP). The Reading Recovery Program was developed in New Zealand by educator and child psychologist Marie Clay and piloted in the United States in Columbus, Ohio, beginning in the fall of 1984. The Reading Recovery Program is targeted for first grade children who fall into the lowest 20 percent in reading within a school and who also meet certain criteria of the Diagnostic Survey (Clay, 1985). The children in RRP are provided with a one-on-one, 30 minute lesson every day by a specially trained teacher. This one-to-one teaching continues until the child is judged able to make normal progress without additional help. The RRP has demonstrated subtantial progress through third grade as evidenced in longitudinal studies conducted in 1988 and 1991 by Pinnell, et al.

During the one-on-one teaching sessions the teacher uses special techniques to help children develop effective strategies that good readers use. One strategy is repeated readings. In repeated readings the child reads the sentence, the paragraph or the story several times. Researchers, such as Samuels (1979), Koskien and Blum (1986), Dowhower (1987), Clay (1985), Labbo and Teale (1990), and Rasinski (1988), have stated that there were significant effects on fluency, word recognition and comprehension when repeated readings are used.

Another strategy is rephrasing. In rephrasing the student has the opportunity to formulate questions about

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the story, and engages the student in the activity of reading with a purpose (Labbo & Teale, 1990). It also gives the student verbal interaction which Atwell (1987) and Hansen (1987) state will help the student become a member of the community of readers. Students learn to negogiate meaning socially and to clarify the basic meaning of the text when there are confusions.

Another strategy that good readers use is vocabulary building. Students build their vocabulary by spelling out words on magnetic chalkboards, building words with the teacher's help, and adding to the number of words the student can recognize by sight.

This vocabulary building strategy leads the student to writing a sentence or two of an original story. The teacher helps the student sound out the words and write them down. The student is led to focus on the relationship between sound and symbol and builds a sense of what is called directionality. Directionality means what comes first, second, third, and so on. By writing out a sentence, the student becomes accustomed to the idea of left and right, of returning from the end of one line to the beginning of the next and even of starting and stopping, beginning and ending (Clay, 1991).

Working one-to-one gives the student the opportunity of using the strategy of verbal interaction. In verbal interaction the student deals with rephrasing in written

form. The teacher copies the story the student has written onto a piece of paper and cuts it up, sometimes into words, sometimes into phrases, sometimes letters. Using cues such as punctuation, capitalization, word spacing, and the meaning of the words and phrases themselves, the student then puts the story back in order, making certain the narrative sounds right, looks right, and makes sense. The teacher then puts the pieces of the cut-up sentence into an envelope so the student can take it home and reconstruct it with someone in his/her family. The teacher writes the story on the envelope so that the family member knows the proper sequence of the words (Clay, 1985).

In a 1991 research by Slavin, Karwit, and Wasik, it was concluded that among nine programs reviewed for preventing early school failures, the program the involved one-to-one teaching had not only the largest immediate effects on reading achievement, but it was also the only program to have lasting effects, at least through the third grade. One-to-one teaching can take the form of peer tutoring which occurs when tutor and tutee are the same age. It can also take the form of tutoring in which the tutor is older than the tutee. However, sometimes the term peer tutoring is used to include both types.

Research has demonstrated that with proper training, students can successfully tutor other students (Gaustad

1992). Sarbin (1976) stated that juvenile tutors are often more effective than adult classroom teachers. In fact, Sarbin reports that a 1975 study showed that children are superior to teachers or adult tutors when making decisions about a student's understanding of a subject.

Rekrut (1994) adds that students of any age or grade level can be either tutor or tutee, but cross-age tutors were usually at least fifth graders, since their achievement patterns have been stabilized, and have usually developed specific skills that lower achievers and younger students must attain. They also are sufficiently mature to undertake responsibility of younger children.

In 1982, researchers, Cohen, Kulik, and Kulik stated that the benefits of cross-age tutoring are apparent in many areas including gains in academic achievement and attitudes towards school for both the tutor and the tutee.

When implementing a peer tutoring program, Gaustad (1992) agrees with Lippitt (1976) that it is of vital importance to train the tutors properly in order to ensure the success of a tutoring program.

With research supporting one-to-one tutoring, which benefits both tutees and tutors, the writer of this study will implement a cross-age tutoring program in reading using the proven reading strategies of repeated readings, rephrasing, vocabulary building, writing, and

verbal interaction.

Project Outcomes and Solution Components

As a result of the cross-age tutoring program, during the period of September 1995 to January 1996, the targeted second grade students will increase their reading achievement as measured by published reading tests and by teacher observations.

In order to accomplish the terminal objective, the following processes will transpire within the first three weeks of September 1995.

1. Selection of 27 second grade tutees, by recommendations made by second grade teachers and supported by their end of year first grade reading test scores and teacher observations.

2. Researcher will acquire permission from the parents of both the fifth grade tutors and the targeted second grade tutees (Appendices B and C).

3. Researcher may administer optional survey to fifth grade tutors if deemed necessary (Appendix D).

4. Tutors will administer survey to second grade tutees (Appendix E).

On the last week of September 1995, the targeted second graders will take the published 1993 MacMillan/ McGraw-Hill Pre-Book Assessment, level 6, which will be administered and graded by the tutors, under the researcher's guidance.

Initial training of the tutors will take place the first two weeks of October. The focus of this initial training will be the strategy of verbal interaction. This will be accomplished by using the technique of prompting. This strategy will be applied when the tutor meets with the tutee to discuss the pictures of an assigned story and make a prediction of the story.

The training of tutors will be incorporated and on-going throughout this study during the tutors' reading and language arts class. The training of strategies and techniques will always be modeled by the researcher and the tutors will always role play with each other before meeting with assigned tutees.

This training, modeling, and practicing will develop more confidence for the tutors. It will also ensure that all tutors are using the same terminology and procedures, which will prove helpful if a tutor is absent and the tutee needs to join another tutor.

During the last two weeks of October the training of tutors will focus on the strategy of repeated readings, rephrasing, and vocabulary building. The tutee will have the opportunity to re-read a story and using new words in the retelling of the story. The tutor will continue to use the prompting technique and begin to use the pause and praise techniques. The pause technique will remind the tutor to delay attention to the tutee's error for at

least five seconds, or until the end of the sentence to self-correct more often, thus increasing accuracy and comprehension. The technique of praise will be modeled, practiced, and used specially for self-correcting and correct responses following prompts. Praise will also be given for effort and progress in reading.

During the month of November, the tutors will be trained on prompting the tutee in writing short stories. The tutors will keep published copies until the end of January.

The reading strategies of repeated readings, resprasing, and vocabulary building and writing, and verbal interaction will continue through the end of January.

The tutors will meet with their tutees three days per week for 10 to 20 minutes per session in the researcher's classroom. Tutors will keep a journal which will contain the objective of the lessons, observations, and reactions. The tutors will keep this journal and all materials used during a tutoring session in a shoe box which will be kept in the tutoring room.

During the implementation of this practicum, the researcher will meet weekly for 20 minutes with second grade teachers, who will voice their observations of targeted second graders. The researcher will record observations. The second grade teachers will also give to

the researcher a list of vocabulary words, which can be practiced during tutoring sessions.

Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the effects of cross-age tutoring in reading:

1. The tutees will demonstrate growth in reading through the test scores from the MacMillan/McGraw-Hill Pre-Book Assessment Test and the MacMillan/McGraw-Hill Mid-Year Assessent Test.

2. The tutees will demonstrate growth in reading as evidenced by classroom teacher observations.

3. The tutors will demonstrate positive effects by applying reading strategies in their own reading and language arts class as evidenced by classroom teacher observations.

4. The tutors will demonstrate organization skills through journals.

Chapter 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of Intervention

The objective of this project was to improve reading comprehension and word attack skills of targeted second graders. The implementation of a cross-age tutoring program was selected as the strategy to effect the desired change.

Cross-age tutoring was used as an instructional technique in delivering the subject matter content. Reading strategies which were used during the tutoring sessions were taught, modeled, and role-played to the fifth grade tutors during their regular reading language arts classes.

The students involved in this research consisted of 27 fifth grade tutors, and 29 second grade students, as the tutees. Based on the reading test scores on the 1993 level 5 McMillan-MacGraw/Hill end of the first grade reading test, which was administered in May 1995, and the recommendations from the four second grade teachers, the researcher identified the targeted group by the end of the

third week of the 1995-1996 school year.

On the fourth week, the parents of both the tutors and the tutees were invited to an evening informational meeting. At this meeting the cross-age tutoring program was explained. The parents also received a letter of explanation with a permission slip attached. The permission slip allowed their child to participate in the program (Appendices B and C).

All but seven parents attended the meeting. Parents who did not attend, were sent the informational letter and the permission slip via mail. All fifth and second graders were granted permission.

By the end of the fifth week, tutors and tutees were matched by gender, race, and in four cases, by their native language, which was other than English. These groups were maintained throughout the intervention, and met for 20 to 25 minutes, three days per week. All tutoring sessions occurred in the researcher's classroom and the adjoining hallway.

The researcher distributed spiral notebooks to each tutor. The tutors were instructed to document observation, reactions, and comments after each tutoring session. These journals were kept in a shoebox, which was supplied by each tutor. These shoeboxes were referred to as the "portable desk." Along with the journals, tutors kept lesson plans, pencils, crayons, cut-up

sentence strips and other materials which were used during tutoring sessions. The "portable desks" were kept in the researcher's classroom.

During the first month of the school year, reading instruction to the fifth graders was focused on using and modeling the reading strategies of prompting. Sample lesson plans devoted to these strategies can be found in Appendices F and G. These strategies were then role-played by the fifth graders before meeting with assigned tutees.

The focus of the first two tutoring sessions, which started on the sixth week of the school year, was to introduce the tutors to their tutees. With only 26 trained tutors, and 29 tutees, 3 tutors worked with 2 assigned tutees for the whole intervention. During the second session, under the researcher's supervision, the tutors administered a survey to their tutees (Appendix E). Also under the researcher's supervision, the tutors administered the McMillan-MacGraw/Hill 1994, Level 6 pre-book assessment. The assessment was graded by the tutors the following day during the tutor's language arts class.

For the first three weeks the 1993 level 5 first grade reading book of McMillan-MacGraw/Hill was used The stories were first read by the tutors in their reading class. During this time, the researcher would

model the focused strategies of prompting, predicting, and rephrasing. The researcher wrote lesson plans for each of the stories which were read during tutoring sessions. Each tutor was given a copy of the lesson plans. Samples of such lesson plan can be found in Appendices F and G. This procedure of the researcher modeling each story and the tutors role-playing occurred once a week before a tutoring session. The uniformity of using the same terminology and procedure was important. Its importance was obvious, when on a couple of occassions when a tutor was absent, the tutee would work with another tutor. It appeared to lessen confusion of the tutee.

Five weeks into the intervention, during a regularly scheduled meeting with the four second grade teachers, it was jointly decided to change from using the first grade reading book to the second grade reading book. The decision of using the first grade reader had been based on the recommendation by a reading specialist, for reading familiar text which the students had experienced the previous year. The researcher and second grade teachers agreed that repeated readings for the text used in the classroom would be appropriate at this point of the intervention. The second grade teachers would introduce a new story on Mondays and the tutors would do repeated readings during the tutoring sessions. Coinciding with the switch to the second grade reader, the researcher

introduced and modeled the strategies of pause and praise. A sample can be found in Appendix H. Again, the tutors role-played the strategies before meeting with tutees.

In addition to repeated readings and verbalizing, tutors began to make flashcards of the second grade spelling words. The flashcards were practiced with the second graders for the first five to ten minutes at the beginning of each tutoring session. The spelling words were grouped by their phonetic similarities. At times, the tutors would draw a picture depicting the meaning of the word. The flashcards were banded together and given to the tutees at the end of the first weekly session. The tutees would then be responsible for returning the flashcards for use in the following two sessions. On Fridays, the tutees would take a spelling test in their classrooms. The second grade classroom teachers would grade the test and share the score with the tutees who would then share their score with their tutor. Repeated readings and the practice of spelling words continued for the remainder of the intervention.

To reinforce vocabulary development, writing narrative short stories was used as a strategy. Over a period of twelve weeks, four short shorts were published by the second grade tutees. The first short story focused on, "What would you do if you were the main character?" The second short story focused on, "What do

you think the main character will do now?" The third short story's theme was, "If I were a Gift..." The final short story was, "If you could be any person in the world for a day, whose shoes would you like to wear and why?" All stories, with the exception of,"If I were a Gift..." were take-offs from stories which had been read and discussed with the tutors.

All stories were exhibited in the school's hallways. The cross-age tutoring program concluded with the tutors and tutees each receiving a copy of a photograph showing them at a session.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

In order to assess the effects of cross-age tutoring on reading comprehension, a pre-book reading assessment was done before the intervention. At the conclusion of the intervention an end of book reading test was administered. The data of these assessments are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Comparison of Pre and Post Reading Assessments

Student No.	Pre book	Post book
1	31%	31%
2	54%	50%
3	54%	58%
4	15%	42%
5	8%	61%
6	31%	53%
7	31%	44%
8	54%	72%
9	31%	36%
10	8%	52%
11	68%	76%
12	23%	52%
13	46%	63%
14	31%	53%
15	46%	64%
16	38%	72%
17	N/A	N/A
18	38%	72%
19	15%	69%
20	92%	64%
21	54%	72%
22	N/A	N/A
23	8%	56%
24	0%	44%
25	31%	61%
26	46%	72%
27	N/A	N/A
28	46%	69%
29	8%	61%
Mean	34.88%	58.42%

A simple comparison indicates that there was an average increase of 23.54% of items answered correctly. Though 29 students were tested 3 students were noted as N/A due to not following proper testing procedures or having moved in to the school after the initial screening took place with no pretesting assessment done.

TABLE 3

Frequency Distribution Comparing Student Differences from Pre book to Post book scores in Reading

Increments	No. of Students
-25	1
-20	0
-15	0
-10	0
- 5	0
0	3
+ 5	2
+10	1
+15	4
+20	3
+25	3
+30	3
+35	0
+40	2
+45	1
+50	3

The distribution indicates that 20 students or 76.92% of the students scored 10 percentage points or higher on the post book assessment than the pre book. Five students scored within 4 points of their pre book assessment score indicating no signigicant change. One student had a significant loss. The classroom teacher reports that during testing the student became ill and completed the test later under the direction of another second grade student.

To assess the effects of cross-age tutoring on word attack skills, the average scores of the first nine weeks of spelling tests is compared to the average scores of the second nine weeks of spelling tests. Table 4 indicates these results. Scores over 100% were due to correctly spelling bonus words for the week.

In addition to the assessment data presented in Tables 2 and 4, weekly meetings with the second grade teachers indicated that they observed the targeted second graders to appear more enthusiastic towards reading. The second grade teachers observed the targeted group volunteering more often, making fewer mistakes when reading orally and more eager to verbalize their predictions about stories read in class. The observations of this changed behavior can be supported by the results of the pre and post second grade tutees' survey (Table 5).

Table 5 shows a 10% to 20% increase of students

who are happier about reading in each of the 7 questions. It also indicates a 3% to 24% decrease in the number of students who are unhappy about reading. Of particular interest are the tutees' responses to the questions dealing with their reading buddies. Zero students indicate unhappiness about receiving help from their reading buddy or reading to their reading buddy.

TABLE 4

Comparison of Averages of First Quarter Spelling Scores

to

Second Quarter Spelling Scores

Student No.	Quarter 1	Quarter 2
1	53%	43%
2	80%	100%
3	91%	100%
4	53%	70%
5	89%	104%
6	79%	78%
7	39%	58%
8	85%	103%
9	81%	77%
10	95%	82%
11	78%	88%
12	87%	95%
13	94%	96%
14	63%	65%
15	90%	86%
16	78%	81%
17	86%	91%
18	93%	92%
19	93%	85%
20	85%	78%
21	90%	93%
22	75%	83%
23	87%	90%
24	76%	75%
25	66%	54%
26	71%	88%
27	N/A	N/A
28	91%	95%
29	70%	56%
Mean	79.21%	Mean 82.10%

TABLE 5

Pre and Post Results of Second Grade Tutee's Survey

1. Reading is fun.				
	Pre	16	9	4
	Post	22	5	2
2. I like to read aloud.				
	Pre	9	8	12
	Post	15	9	5
3. I get alot of chances to read aloud.				
	Pre	12	6	11
	Post	16	7	6
4. Reading is interesting.				
	Pre	15	8	6
	Post	20	5	4
5. I like to talk about what I read.				
	Pre	15	7	7
	Post	18	8	3
6. I like a 'buddy' to help me read.				
	Pre	25	3	1
	Post	27	2	0
7. I like to read to my buddy.				
	Pre	21	7	1
	Post	25	5	0
Total difference		+29	-5	-22

Conclusions

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data on the pre and post reading test scores, the surveys, improvement on spelling tests, and the observations made by the second grade teachers, the targeted second grade students showed marked improvement in reading comprehension, word attack skills and a more positive attitude towards reading. The strategies of prompting, predicting, pausing, and repeated readings used on one-to-one cross-age tutoring sessions, appear to have been applied in the regular classroom during reading and, also during testing. The positive comments made by the tutees such as:

1. I can read better now.
2. I sound out my words more.
3. I got a 100 on my spelling test today!
4. Can I come for more "Reading Buddies"? (sic) (As the program was affectionately referred to.)
5. My mom says I'm doing better.
6. I like to read now.

On several occassions the parents of the tutees commented on the positive attitude their child was demonstrating towards reading. Many parents verbalized this hope for the "Reading Buddies" program to continue. The request by the school's principal for the researcher to present the "Reading Buddy Program" to the Board of Education at a regular school board meeting

further showed the support and need to establish a cross-age tutoring program.

Not only did the second grade tutees benefit, but the writer observed the fifth grade tutors benefit academically from the time spent reviewing and practicing material with their tutees.

The cross-age tutoring program also provided the tutors with opportunities to practice and improve communication skills and work habits. Also, the tutors' self-esteem rose as they saw their tutees improve in reading and in spelling.

It was not uncommon when a second grader would bring a birthday treat to the tutor. Waves and hugs were a common occurance when tutors and tutees crossed each other in the hall.

The writer of this project, also observed the tutors applying the "pause and praise" strategies with each other when discussing a reading selection. They also appeared to be more accepting of their peers and made fewer derogatory remarks. The responsibility of the tutors was obvious in their safekeeping of their journals and "portable desks".

Cross-age tutoring definitely had a positive effect on both the tutors and the tutees. The writer of this project strongly recommends the adoption of a cross-age tutoring program in any school.

Recommendations

The success of the cross-age tutoring program with focus on improving reading comprehension, did not happen haphazardly. Simply putting two students together would not have resulted in success. The tutors need training in effective tutorial and communication skills. The training of tutors was always on-going, not only during their reading and language arts classes but throughout the school day when an opportunity arose.

The matching of tutors and tutees by gender, race, and native language was done with care to help establish a more comfortable setting between the tutor and the tutee.

Coordinating the schedules of the researcher and the four second grade classes from which the tutees came was a major challenge. The schedules of some of the targeted students also had to be coordinated, since these students were also pulled out of their regular classes to receive resource help (speech, physical therapy, social work, learning disabilities etc...).

The writer recommends an after school or before school tutoring program, which would eliminate the juggling of classroom schedules. However, due to a large number of children bussed to school, monies to cover the cost of transportation would have to be obtained.

The training of tutors which is of vital importance

would also occur before or after school, thus not taking time away from the regular curriculum. With tutoring before or after school, there would also be at least two teachers who would actively supervise and support the tutors. The writer had to actively supervise 56 students at each session, which occurred not only in the classroom but also in the adjoining hallway due to overcrowdedness in the classroom alone.

Since the tutoring sessions occurred during the last 20 to 25 minutes of the school day, often there was little, if any, time to reflect upon the tutoring session. Reflections would then have to be done the following day. Ideally, time to reflect after each a session gives the tutors more support from each other and learn from each other's experience as well as from the suggestions from the teacher(s).

To insure success of a tutoring program an established, specific and measurable objective is needed. In this project the main objective was to increase reading comprehension of the targeted second graders. The need of frequent assessment of individual progress and evaluation of the program's success encourages the tutors, tutees, and the supervising teacher(s). Tutors observed and commented on the increase in reading fluency made by the tutees. The weekly spelling test scores of the tutees were shared by the second grade teachers with the

tutors. This encouraged both tutors and tutees.

Despite the challenges of scheduling, limited time and crowded conditions the cross-age tutoring program, which was affectionately labeled "Reading Buddies" was successful. The support of the school's principal, second grade teachers, collegues, parents, and the enthusiasm of both the tutors and the tutees were essential to the success of this program.

In conclusion, the writer recommends the following for a successful cross-age tutoring program:

1. Establish a targeted objective which can be measurable.

2. Establish a procedure for selecting and matching tutors and tutees.

3. Tutors may be screened for desired attitudes.

4. Establish a location that is conducive for tutoring.

5. Train tutors.

6. Structure the materials carefully.

7. Active supervision and support by teacher(s) who understand and believe in the program.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Teacher Survey

TO: PRIMARY TEACHERS
FROM: MARGO AND MIKE
RE: PHONICS CONCERNS
DATE: FEBRUARY 1, 1995

As we have previously discussed, many of you have significant concerns with the phonics component of the reading series. On Friday, January 20, 1995, I asked you to provide me with specific concerns and learning deficiencies evident in your students. This information will enable us to address your concerns and secure materials to support your instruction.

Last Thursday, I visited a teacher who presented a reading lesson, inclusive of the phonics component. This information, with the information you can provide, will enable us to address this situation in a timely fashion.

PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO RESPOND TO THIS INQUIRY. WE ARE UNABLE TO ADDRESS YOUR CONCERNS IF WE DO NOT HAVE SPECIFICS.

THIS INFORMATION IS DUE TO MARGO BY WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8th.

1.) HOW MANY OF THE CHILDREN IN YOUR CLASS EXHIBIT PROBLEMS IN PHONICS? WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR CLASS IS INVOLVED?

2.) PLEASE IDENTIFY THE SPECIFIC CONCERNS. SOME QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT WANT TO ADDRESS? DO THE CHILDREN MASTER THE CONCEPTS INITIALLY, BUT CAN NOT RETRIEVE THE INFORMATION UPON NEED? ARE THE CHILDREN UNABLE TO APPLY THE STRATEGIES IN UNFAMILIAR TEXT? DO YOU FIND THAT ALL STUDENTS LACK THE SKILLS, OR A PARTICULAR GROUP OF CHILDREN (E.G. THOSE WITH LOW ABILITY OR LEARNING DISABILITIES)? DO YOU SEE A CONCERN WITH SPIRAL REVIEW?

3.) INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES:

PLEASE DESCRIBE HOW YOU PRESENTLY INCORPORATE PHONICS INTO YOUR PROGRAM?

HOW DO YOU EMPLOY FLEXIBLE GROUPING IN YOUR CLASSROOM? IS PHONICS A PART OF YOUR FLEXIBLE GROUPING PROGRAM? HOW OFTEN DO YOU USE FLEXIBLE GROUPING DURING AN AVERAGE WEEK OF INSTRUCTION?

HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU SPEND TEACHING READING EACH DAY? WHAT PERCENTAGE OF THIS TIME IS DEVOTED TO PHONICS INSTRUCTION/REVIEW AS DESCRIBED IN THE PROGRAM?

WHAT INTERVENTION STRATEGIES DO YOU USE WITH CHILDREN UNABLE TO MASTER THE SKILLS AS YOU TEACH THEM?

WHAT REALISTIC RECOMMENDATIONS DO YOU HAVE FOR IMPROVING THE PHONETIC COMPONENT OF THE READING PROGRAM?

Appendix B

Letter to fifth grade parents

September, 1995

Dear Parents.

This year your fifth grader will have the opportunity of being a "reading buddy" to a second grader.

Your child will meet with his/her buddy three days per week for approximately sixteen weeks. Each session will be ten to twenty minutes in length.

During these sessions the fifth grade children will listen to the second graders read, talk about the story, and help them write a "little" story.

The "reading buddy" program has been proven by leading researchers to benefit not only the second graders but also the fifth graders. They will benefit by building their self-confidence and self-esteem, develop a sense of responsibility, and reinforce their own knowledge and skills.

I am looking forward to guiding your child in being asuccessful "reading buddy."

Thank you for your support. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at Jonas Salk School, 739-3603.

Sincerely,

Susan M. Carli

I do _____, do not _____ give my fifth grader permission to participate in the "reading buddy" program.

_____

parent signature

Appendix C

Letter to second grade parents

October, 1995

Dear Parents,

This year your second grader has the opportunity of being a "reading buddy" to a fifth grader.

Your child will meet with a fifth grader three days per week from the end of October to the end of January. Each session will be approximately ten to twenty minutes in length. Each session will be supervised by me, Susan Carli.

The "reading buddy" program has been proven by leading researchers to be very beneficial, and is being endorsed by your child's classroom teacher.

In these sessions your child will have the opportunity to practice reading aloud, discuss the story read, and reinforce new reading skills.

I am looking forward to your child being part of this "reading buddy" program. Please feel free to contact me at Jonas Salk School, 739-3603, if you have any questions.

Sincerely.

Susan M. Carli
Coordinator and Fifth
Grade Teacher

I do _____, do not _____ give my second grader,

_____, permission to

participate in the "reading buddy" program.

_____
parent signature

PLEASE, RETURN THE BOTTOM PORTION BY MONDAY, OCTOBER 16th. THANK YOU.

Appendix D

Fifth grade tutors' survey

SA strongly agree
A agree
D disagree
SD strongly disagree

1. I enjoy reading, when I have "free time."

SA A D SD

2. I like to help younger children read.

SA A D SD

3. I like to read to younger children.

SA A D SD

4. I am a good reader.

SA A D SD

5. If I don't understand a story the first time, I go back and reread it.

SA A D SD

Appendix E

Second grade tutees' survey

1. Reading is fun.

2. I like to read aloud.

3. I get alot of chances to read aloud.

4. Reading is interesting.

5. I like to talk about what I read.

6. I like a "buddy" to help me read.

7. I like to read to my buddy.

Appendix F

Lesson Plan for Prompting, Predicting, and Rephrasing

After Reading

Page 92 Why is the baby rattlesnake, B.R. so sad?

What do you think B.R. will do to get a rattle?

Page 94 Pretend you are B.R. What did you tell your mom and dad?

Page 96 Let's make the sound that mother, father, and sister made when B.R. cried.

Page 99 How do you think it feels to hear loud crying all night?

What do you think will happen next?

Page 100 I wonder if B.R. will get into trouble like the elder said. "What do you think?"

Page 103 Does B.R. like his new rattle?

What makes you think this way?

How does the picture let us know that B.R. feels that way?

Let's make the sound of the rattle.

Page 105 Let's think about what we know about rattlesnakes.

When do they shake their tails and make the rattle sound?

What might Jack Rabbit, Old Man Turtle, and Prairie Dog expect B.R. to do next?

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Page 107 Do you think B.R. is going to get in trouble?

What do you think will happen next?

Page 109 What do you think about B.R.'s idea to scare the chief's daughter?

Why do you think his mother and father would want to warn him not to scare her?

Page 111 How do you think B.R. feels when he sees the chief's daughter?

What do you think B.R. will do next?

Page 113 Put yourself in the chief's daughter's place. You're strolling down the path and all of a sudden a rattlesnake darts out of the rocks rattling its tail. What would you do?

page 115 How do you think B.R. feels now?

What do you think he'll do next?

Page 116 How do you think B.R. feels now?

How does the picture help you understand his feelings?

Why do you think B.R. wants to go home?

What do ycu think will happen when he gets there?

Page 118 Do you think B.R. learned a lesson?

What was it?

Page 119 What do mother and father do when B.R. tells them what happened?

How does this make B.R. feel?

What do you think B.R. learned about his family?

On Friday, take turns reading the story with your tutee.

Appendix G

Lesson Plan for Prompting, Predicting, and Rephrasing

Fortunately, pp 128-167.

Monday:
1. Tutors preview selection.
2. Make predictions.
3. Read story silently.
4. Revise predictions.
5. Role play.

Tuesday:
1. Meet with tutee.
2. Discuss the words: fortunate/unfortunate. Give examples of having good luck-bad luck. i.e. I got a new pair of shoes but they hurt my feet. I went on a great vacation but I got sick.
3. Predict story by previewing picture.
4. Name objects found in pictures. i.e. motor, parachute, pitchfork, and haystack.

Tutor reads first, the same page is reread by tutee.

Use these questions after reading.

Page 130 Ned is happy about being invited to a party. Would you be happy too?

Page 133 What did Ned find out and how does he feel about it?

Page 135 Why do you think Ned borrowed an airplane?

What do you think will happen next?

Page 137 Did you expect something unlucky to happen to Ned?

Do you think something else will happen to Ned?

Will it be something fortunate or unfortunate?

Why do you think that?

Page 139 What's going on in this story?

What's the pattern?

What do you think will happen next?

Page 140 Oh no! More bad luck! Now - there's a hole in the parachute. What do you think will happen next?

Continue prompting, predicting, and verbalizing for the rest of the story.

Friday: Give tutee a choice of reading the fortunate or unfortunate parts of the story.

Appendix H

Lesson Plan for Pause and Praise

The strategies of Pause and Praise were introduced as:

Pause:
1. Give tutee a chance to sound out word.
2. Finish reading sentence.
3. Wait! Count to 5 before telling (one thousand, two thousand, etc....)

Praise: Give praise when appropriate. They know when it's fake.

Examples of Praises.

1. You did a good job sounding the word out.
2. Nice job in checking it over!
3. Way to go!
4. Good ideas. (I like your idea about what you think would happen.)